

2. SOME NOTES ON THE LONGEVITY OF TWO SPECIES OF INDIAN WILD CATS IN CAPTIVITY

The present communication deals with some notes on the longevity of two species of Indian Wild Cats observed at the Nandankanan Biological Park, Orissa.

Golden Cat : (*Felis temmincki*): One full grown male of this species received in the Park on 21-7-1966 died on 18-7-1979, after remaining for 12 years, 11 months and 27 days in captivity. The estimated age at the time of death was about 15 years. It was living with one or two female specimens of the same species. It was housed in an enclosure having cemented floor space of approximately 16.5 sq. metres, height 2.80 metres. There was a two chambered cave like retiring den within the enclosure where the golden cats use to stay throughout the day. It was fed with 750 gm of goat meat and 250 gm of beef with bones six days in a week and only 375 gm of goat meat once a week. One live chicken was given once a month in place of its usual diet of goat meat and beef.

According to Crandall (1965) this species of cat has not done well at the New York Zoological Park and none survived for more than 2 years and a golden cat lived for 17 years, 8 months and 25 days at St. Louis Zoological Park. The longevity of this cat in the Zoological Gardens of London is given as 10 years, 9 months and 3 days (Flower 1931).

Clouded Leopard : (*Neofelis nebulosa*): One

full grown adult female clouded leopard received in the Park on 29-4-1966 died on 9-2-1980, after 13 years, 9 months and 12 days in captivity. The estimated age at the time of death was about 15 years. It was kept along with either one male and/or one female specimen of the same species. They were housed in a semi out-door enclosure having an area of approximately 48 sq. metres, height 2.80 metres. There were two spacious retiring cells within the enclosure. The animal maintained very good health on a diet of 1 kg goat meat and 100 gm beef with bones daily for six days in a week and only 500 gm goat meat once a week. One live chicken was given once a month instead of its usual diet of goat meat and beef.

At the New York Zoological Park none of the clouded leopards survived for long, the best record of longevity being 4 years and 8 months. A clouded leopard lived for 10 years, 8 months and 3 days in the San Diego Zoological Garden (Crandall, loc. cit). The longevity of this species in the National Zoological Park is given as 15 years, 10 months and 19 days whereas the longevity of this species in the Philadelphia Zoological Garden is given as 16 years, 11 months and 1 day (Jones 1958).

We would be interested in the longevity records of these two species of wild cats in other Indian Zoological Parks.

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3. CAUSES OF DEER MORTALITY IN INDIA

In India the information on causes of mortality in deer in free living state or captivity is very meagre. There have been reports of occasional episodes of Rinderpest (Schaller 1967, Srivastava 1957, Singh 1958, Gupta and Verma 1949, Ray and Samanta 1974), tuberculosis (Liston and Soparkar 1924, Basak *et al.* 1976) ; fascioliasis (Rao and Acharjyo 1972) etc. Isolated cases of parasitic infestations and other miscellaneous conditions have also been recorded (Rao and Acharjyo 1972, Rao and Acharjyo 1969, Tripathi *et al.* 1971, Patnaik and Acharjyo 1970, Sen Gupta 1974). This paper records the causes of mortality among various species of deer in Zoological Parks, National Parks, Sanctuaries and reserve forests in different parts of the country.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In an attempt to determine the relative importance of various diseases to which members of cervidae family are prone to suffer and the causes of mortality, a countrywide survey was conducted. The mortality information for three years period (1975-1977), based on post mortem examinations was obtained from fifteen Zoological Parks (Bhillai, Bombay, Darjeeling, Delhi, Hyderabad, Junagadh, Kanpur, Kohima, Mysore, Pune, Renuka, Shillong, Silvassa, Tutikandi and Visakhapatnam) ; two national parks (Corbett and Shivpuri) ; one Sanctuary (Kinnersanni) and reserve forests in two states (West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir). Information on the species of dead animal and

date of death was also collected. Information was sought also on total populations of each species, sex and age at death of each animal, but the provided information was not complete and therefore, could not be used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the three year period 1975-1977, a total of 243 deaths had been recorded in eleven species of deer which included 107 Chital (*Axis axis*) ; 29 hog deer (*A. porcinus*) ; 40 barking deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*) ; 4 musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*) ; 3 fallow deer (*Dama dama*) ; 28 sambar (*Cervus unicolor*) ; 8 thamin (*C. eldi*) ; 2 Kashmir stag (*C. elaphus hanglu*) ; one swamp deer (*C. duvauceli*) ; 14 mouse deer (*Tragulus meminna*) and 7 Sikka deer (*Cervus nippon*). Out of these, Kashmir Stag, Musk deer, Swamp deer and Thamin deer are endangered species and hence have been included in Schedule I of Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. Fallow deer (*Dama dama*) and Sikka deer (*C. nippon*) are exotic species and are being displayed in various Indian Zoos. Sikka deer has also been listed as endangered species. Out of 243, 32 deaths occurred of animals in free living state in national parks, sanctuaries and forests and the remaining among animals in the zoological gardens.

Causes of mortality :

As shown in table 1, tuberculosis was quite a frequent cause of mortality in captive chital,